

## **MIAMI BEACH LIGHT RAIL/MODERN STREETCAR PROJECT**

### **BACKGROUND**

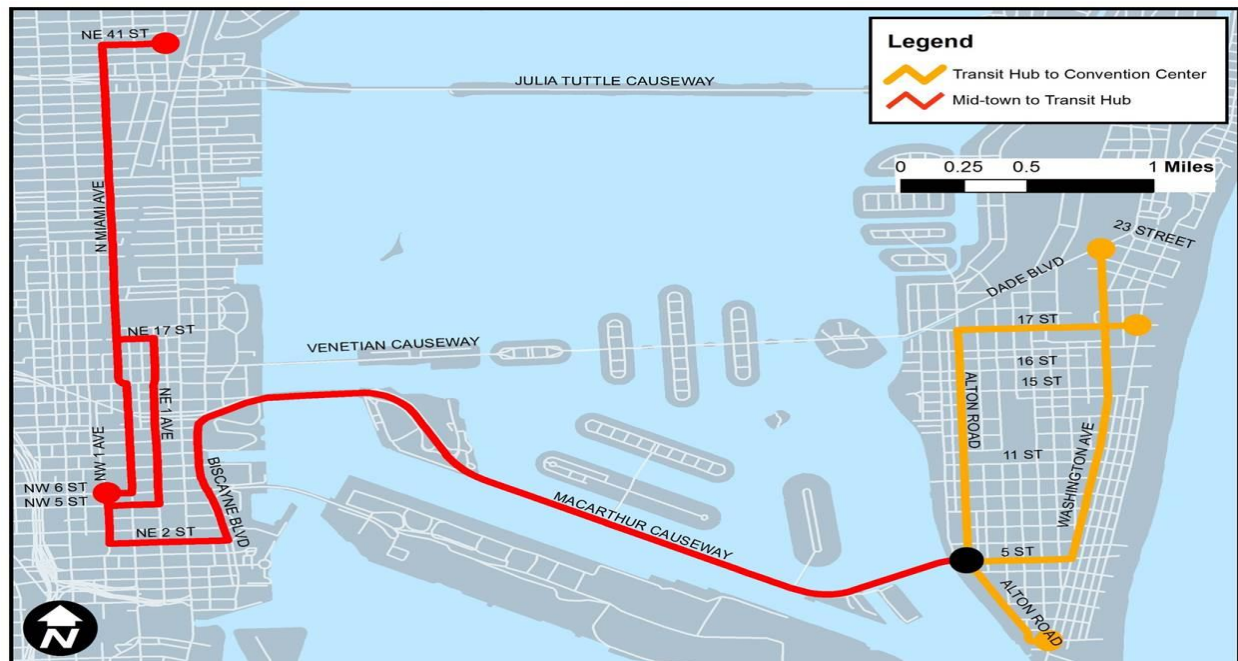
In 2003-2004, the Miami-Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) prepared environmental and engineering studies as part of the Bay Link (Miami - Miami Beach Corridor Transportation Study). The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Bay Link Study recommended a light rail transit/modern streetcar system powered by overhead catenary wires to connect the cities of Miami Beach and Miami via dedicated right-of-way along the MacArthur Causeway. Due to technology concerns and limited funding, the Bay Link Project did not move forward, but has remained in the unfunded portion of the MPO Long Range Transportation Plan.

An MPO Study was completed in June 2015 and reaffirmed the MacArthur Causeway as the preferred alignment to connect Miami Beach and Miami. The MPO Study recommended an off-wire or “wireless” light rail transit/modern streetcar system for the portion within each urban area as the preferred vehicle technology, as well as the use of exclusive lanes for the transit vehicles to provide reliable service.

The Policy Executive Committee (PEC), a committee created to give direction for the development of the Beach Corridor Transit Connection Project, and comprised of elected officials from Miami-Dade County, the City of Miami Beach, and the City of Miami, endorsed moving forward with the Direct Connect Project on an expedited basis, via a public-private partnership (P3) delivery method and endorsed expediting the Miami Beach and Miami portions of the project.

The PEC met on February 4, 2016 to discuss FDOT’s recommendations regarding approaches to expedite the entire project (Downtown-MacArthur Causeway-Convention Center) while allowing each City to move forward with their portion of the project to the extent that it does not jeopardize Federal funding of financing for other portions of the project. At that meeting, the PEC endorsed moving forward with two separate projects, instead of the one-project approach recommended by FDOT.

1. A Federal New Starts Project with Limits 2 from Midtown Miami (at or near NE 41<sup>st</sup> Street and NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue) to Transit Hub Connector located in the vicinity of 5th Street and Alton Road in Miami Beach under one National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document, under Miami-Dade County management (“Beach Corridor Direct Connection Project”);
2. A Non-Federal New Starts/Locally Funded Project with Limits from a Transit Hub Connector located in the vicinity of 5th Street and Alton Road to the Miami Beach Convention Center with proposed transit loop system to enhance connectivity, under a State Environmental process to be initiated and led by the City of Miami Beach (“Miami Beach Light Rail/Streetcar Project”).



In June 2015, pursuant to Section 287.05712 of the Florida Statutes, the City received an Unsolicited Proposal from Greater Miami Tramlink Partners, a consortium, for a P3 project with the City to implement an off-wire light rail transit/modern streetcar system in South Beach based on conceptual alignment in the 2015 MPO study.

On December 9, 2015, the City Commission adopted Resolution No. 2015-29236, approving an Agreement for preparation of an environmental analysis for the Miami Beach Light Rail/Modern Streetcar Project” or “Project”.

On December 16, 2015, the Mayor and Commission adopted Resolution No. 2015-29247, accepting receipt of the unsolicited proposal, and authorizing the Administration to solicit alternative proposals for a P3 project, in accordance with Florida Statutes. The scope of the Project contemplates a full “turn-key” delivery approach that consists of and includes the design, construction, financing, operation, and maintenance of the Project.

On July 21, 2016, the MPO amended the Long Range Transportation Plan to include the project development and environmental phase for the Beach Corridor Project in Priority 1; funding for this phase has been fully secured.

The United States Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Region IV is aware of the current planning efforts for the proposed Miami Beach Streetcar project. The City has informed FTA that it is seeking to advance the first phase of the streetcar project through a public-private partnership. FTA Region IV has also been made aware of the interest of Miami-Dade County and the cities of Miami and Miami Beach to link the region with a streetcar system via MacArthur Causeway and recognizes the importance of both the Miami Beach Project and the Beach Corridor Project across the MacArthur Causeway, together connecting this important regional corridor.